

MEDIA, PA — Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) has announced that one of the nation's top officials dealing with Veterans affairs will attend the Seventh Congressional District Veterans Summit on Monday, May 11th, 2009 to address concerns of local Veterans and active service members, their families and their caregivers. John R. Gingrich, Chief of Staff of the Department of Veterans Affairs will participate in the panel discussions portion of the event, which will also feature Congressman Sestak and Admiral "T" McCreary, president of Military.com. Prior to joining the VA, Mr. Gingrich assisted current VA Secretary Eric Shinseki in efforts to transform the Army during the Secretary's tenure as Chief of Staff of the Army. Local, state, and national Veterans Administration Representatives, Veterans Service Organizations, and other service providers will offer on-location assistance to Veterans, Members of the Armed Forces, and their families. The summit will take place at Ridley High School in Folsom, PA from 6 PM to 9 PM.

"The impressive tenures of Mr. Gingrich and Secretary Shinseki in the Army make them exceptionally qualified to be leaders to confront the issues facing the Veterans community," said Congressman Sestak. "Mr. Gingrich is an extraordinary advocate for Veterans and will add a critical perspective to what promises to be a passionate and informative discussion about Veterans issues. He will be an important part of the unsurpassed access that this event will offer to the people and organizations responsible for taking care of the men and women who have served our country.

"As someone who served this nation for 31 years in the Navy, I know the toll deployments take on the families of our Armed Service members. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines don't go to war—families go to war, and nations go to war. Just as we should never forget the brave men and women serving overseas in harm's way, we should never forget the courageous family members that remain behind—family members that take care of children, that pick up the slack, that worry every night about the safety and well-being of loved ones who stand on the front lines in defense of our nation."

This event will bring together dedicated leaders of government and community together with local members of the Veteran and active military community to ensure that the service members of the 7th Congressional District have access to the tools, information, and contacts to obtain proper support in their transition to civilian life. In addition, there will be a discussion of issues facing Veterans of today and tomorrow including implementation of the 21st Century GI Bill, the VA budget and other legislation before the 111th Congress.

"I am honored to host Mr. Gingrich and Rear Admiral McCreary. Their years of service to our

nation's Veterans have been commendable, and I look forward to our continued joint efforts to support our country's servicemen and women and their families. By attending, these men are demonstrating a strong signal to our military community that there are those in our nation who are ready and willing to help," said Congressman Sestak.

Earlier this year, Congressman Sestak voted for, and the House of Representatives passed, a resolution urging President Obama to designate 2009 a year of official recognition of the commitment and sacrifice of military families. "I proudly support designating this year officially—as all years should be in spirit— 'The Year of the Military Family,'" the Congressman said.

Veterans, active service members, and their families are encouraged to attend. Please contact Chip Ridewood at 610-892-8623 or visit www.sestak.house.gov to register.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.

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